Amendment of the Official Secrets Act

1572 SHRI A. G. KULKARNI

SHRI JITENDRABHAI LABHSHANKER BHATT

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to refer to the answer to Starred Question 319 given in the Rajya Sabha on the 23rd May, 1990 and state:

(a) whether the task force set up for examining the kinds of information which could be made available by Government and the institutional set up has since submitted its recommendations,

(b) if so, the details thereof and the action taken thereon; and

(c) what are the salient features of the proposed amendments to the Official Secrets Act?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS AND THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI SUBODH KANT SAHAY): (a) and (b) No, Sir. The report of the Task Force is under compilation.

(c) The proposed amendments to the Official Secrets Act, 1923, are generally aimed at making the relevant provisions more liberal to provide greater access to official information.

Militants' Term for Talks

1573 SHRI E BALANANDAN:

SHRI SUNIL BASU RAY:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news item captioned "Militants" terms for talks with Prime Minister" which appeared in the Indian Express dated 30th November, 1990; and

(b) if so, the details thereof and Government's reaction thereto;

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS AND THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI SUBODH KANT SAHAY): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The news report, *inter-alia* speaks of appointment of a Committee by Parliament for holding negotiations and that the talks should be held in Geneva.

Government would be ready to talk if some approaches it with a view to finding a solution to the problem within the frame-work of the Constitution and the modalities for the meeting would be decided when such an approach is made.

Weapons with Militants in Punjab and Kashmir

1574 SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN

SHRI KRISHAN LAL SHARMA:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to a report which appeared in the Sunday Times dated 2nd December, 1990 to the effect that apart from AK-47 and AK-74 rifles, ground to air shoulder fired missile, undetectable plastic anti-tank and anti-personnel mines, the latest plastic explosives for demolitions, medium and light machine guns and other anti-tank weapons have appeared in large numbers in Punjab and Kashmir as also high velocity spiner rifles with image intensifier nightsights and other night vision equipments; if so, what are the details regarding each kind of weaponry; and

(b) what is Government's reaction thereto and what steps have been taken to meet the serious threat?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS AND THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI SUBODH

KANT SAHAY): (a) Government have seen the news-item referred to.

(b) All possible steps including strengthening of border and vigilance by security forces to prevent the flow of sophisticated weapons etc. to terrorists, have been taken and they are constantly under review.

Kar seva in Ayodhya

1575. SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN·

SHRI KAILASH NARAIN SARANG.

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state.

(a) the State-wise number of persons who had gone to Ayodhya to perform Ram Janamabhoomi Temple Kar seva in October last and how many out of them are missing from each State;

(b) the names of persons out of them who have been killed or injured, State-wise, and

(c) the total number of persons arrested in this connection, State-wise?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS AND THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI SUBODH KANT SAHAY)· (a) to (c) The information is being collected and will be laid on the table of the House.

Instructions regarding shooting on unarmed Demonstrators

1576. SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE·

SHRI ASHWANI KUMAR.

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether para-military forces have general instructions not to shoot on chest or heads of demonstrators etc. who are unarmed and are not indulging in arson and loot;

(b) whether it is a fact that on October 30 and November 2 last in Ayodhya, the para-military forces did shoot on chest and heads of unarmed Ram Bhaktas;

(c) at what level the orders to shoot were given and who signed such orders,

(d) whether in some cases para-military forces broke into private houses also; and

(e) whether Government have investigated or a public enquiry is to be held to investigate and ascertain facts in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS AND THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI SUBODH KANT SAHAY): (a) The para-military forces, who are deployed at the request of the State Governments, are under instructions to use minimum possible force to deal with the given law and order situation.

(b) to (e) The required information from the State Government is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House

Arrest of certain Editors in Ayodhaya

1577. SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE·

SHRI ASHWANI KUMAR·

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state.

(a) whether it is a fact that certain Editors of dailies of Uttar Pradesh and Bihar were arrested or harassed in the context of Ram Janambhoomi temple incidents in Ayodhaya on October 30 and November 2 last; if so, their names,

(b) whether Government consider it as an attack on Freedom of Press; and

(c) whether copies of certain papers were also seized by U.P. and Bihar Governments before they were distributed, if so, the names of such papers and dates?